(b) at present, what is the average land holding in the country;

(c) the steps Government propose to take regarding checking subdivision/fragmentation of land;

(d) the minimum quantum of agricultural land holding required to make farming a viable earning;

(e) whether shrinking of land holdings is an alarming phenomena for growth of agricultural sector; and

(f) if so, the remedial and preventive measures taken therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (e) The average size of land holdings has decreased from 2.28 ha. in 1970-71 to 1.41 ha. In 1995-96. The fragmentation of land holdings affects agricultural operations adversely through imbalance in the land-man ratio, higher cost of cultivation per unit of land, difficulty in irrigation and soil conservation practices and low productivity per unit of land holding.

(b) As per Agriculture Census 1995-96, the average size of operational holdings is 1.41 ha.

(c) and (f) Under the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India land and its management is in the State list. Some State Governments have taken-up the consolidation of land holdings.

(d) In view of the variable cropping conditions affecting crop yields across different regions of the country, there can be no single minimum size of holding required to make farming viable.

Crops under NAIS in Kerala

1190. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the crop presently covered in Kerala under the National Agricultural Insurance Scheme;

(b) whether the State Government has sought the intervention of Government to include certain other perennial crops in the coverage of the Scheme; and

(c) whether Government would consider to accord sanction for the above proposal, if any, and the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Paddy, Tapioca, Pineapple, Turmeric, Ginger and Banana crops have been notified by the Government of Kerala under National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS).

(b) and (c) Kerala Government has requested for inclusion of perennial crops like coconut, pepper, cashew, arecanut, ruber etc. in the NAIS.

However, perennial crops, at present, are not covered under NAIS on account of multi-picking nature of these crops and non-availability of adequate yield data.

Joint Group constituted by the Government to suggest improvements required in the existing crop insurance scheme, has examined all the relevant issues including coverage of perennial crops under NAIS and has recommended extension of insurance cover to perennial horticultural crops. Keeping in view the recommendations of the Joint group, the Government, at present, is engaged in the process of reviewing NAIS.

Agriculture Service Centres

†1191. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the Agricultural Service Centres set up in the country, specially in Uttar Pradesh, State-wise/district-wise;

(b) the State/districts in which the target for setting up such centres has been fixed during 2005-2006 and whether any success has been achieved regarding these targets; and

(c) the details of the funds earmarked for this purpose during the Tenth Five Year Plan alongwith the amount spent, so far, in this regard, State-wise/district-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) 9461 agricultural graduates have been trained under the Central Sector Scheme "Establishment of Agri-Clinics and Agri-Business Centres (ACABCs) by Agricultural Graduates" till 31.1.2006, of which 2739 have set up Agri-Clinics/Agri-Business Centres. The State-wise details of such Centres is given in Statement-I (*see* below).

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.